RECONSTRUCTION: LIBERTY THE CORNER-STONE, AND LINCOLN THE ARCHITECT.

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SPEECH

OF

HON. ISAAC N. ARNOLD,

OF ILLINOIS.

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

MARCH 19, 1864.

WASHINGTON:
PRINTED BY LEMUEL TOWERS.
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On the 22d of February, 1832, the one hundredth anniversary of the birthday of Washington, Daniel Webster speaking of the fearful consequences of disunion, says:

"Other misfortunes may be borne, or their effects overcome. If disastrous war should sweep our commerce from the ocean, another generation may renew it; if it desolate and lay waste our fields, still, under a new cultivation, they will grow green again, and ripen to future harvests. It were but a trifle even if the walls of yonder Capitol were to crumble, if its lofty pillars should fall, and its gorgeous decorations be all covered by the dust of the valley. All these might be rebuilt. *But who shall reconstruct the fabric of demolished government?* Who shall rear again the well-proportioned columns of constitutional liberty? Who shall frame together the skilful architecture which unites national sovereignty with state rights, individual security and public prosperity? No, if these columns fall, they will be raised not again. Like the Coliseum and the Parthenon they will be destined to a mournful, a melancholy immortality. Bitterer tears, however, will flow over them than were ever shed over the monuments of Roman or Grecian art; for they will be the remnants of a more glorious edifice than Greece or Rome ever saw, the edifice of *constitutional American liberty.*"

But I have *faith* that under the guidance of Providence, and on the basis of liberty, this Government is to be "*reconstructed.*" The "skillful architecture which unites State rights and national sovereignty, individual security and public prosperity," is to be again embodied in a still more perfect form; not on the basis of adhering to old errors, "the Union as it was, and the Constitution as it is," but national unity without slavery, and the Constitution, the *Magna Charta* which shall secure *liberty to all.*

This is our grand aim. The wandering stars are to be brought back with their lustre brightened by the ordeal through which they have passed. The grand edifice of American constitutional government is to rise on a broader, firmer, more solid foundation, the basis of universal liberty.

Sir, the *old Continental Congress* and the *Constitutional Convention* are venerable landmarks in American history. We look back to them with mingled reverence and admiration.

The Congress and the statesmen who shall re-establish national unity, with the terrible scourge, slavery, destroyed, who shall heal the wounds of this terrible war, will have rendered a service to our country and humanity equally memorable and still more important.

RECONSTRUCTION.

I approach this question of reconstruction with diffidence, conscious alike of its difficulties and of the fearful responsibilities resting upon those by whom it is to be solved. One thing, I think, may be regarded as settled. We can have no national union and harmony without freedom. The fearful error of uniting free and slave States we shall never repeat. But if the grand idea can be realized of a free, homogeneous people, united in a continental republic based on liberty to all, and retaining the great principles of *Magna Charta* as living principles of our Government, we shall see realized the noblest structure of government and national polity ever organized upon earth. This is a great aim to struggle for; *it is a glorious purpose to die for.* Is it practicable? Are we equal to it? If so, the terrible ordeal through which we are passing, the trial by fire, and the baptism of blood, will be compensated by the glorious future.

In discussing this subject of reconstruction, I will only venture to-day to make suggestions. The subject naturally divides itself into three parts:

1. What are the relations of the rebel States to the national Government?
2. *What the duty of the Executive?*
3. *What the duty of Congress?*

The *status* of the rebellious States is, that they are a portion of our country in revolt. The Constitution and laws of the United States are legally binding upon every person within the rebel territory.

Every person who has violated his duty to the Government, or broken its laws and levied war upon it, is liable to be dealt with as a criminal and a traitor.

The people in rebellion who have made war upon the nation are also in the position of public enemies, and liable to be treated as such. The Government may proceed against them, both as rebels, amenable to our laws, or as public enemies, subject to all the liabilities of such. So much of this rebel territory as we have brought by our arms within our lines, is rightfully held under military government; and it is subject, for the time being, to the government of the Executive, as Commander-in-Chief, until loyal States are reorganized, or until Congress provides by law for some other mode of government.

DUTY OF THE EXECUTIVE.

It is the duty of the Executive to see that the laws are faithfully executed in every part of the United States. It is his duty by the sword and by the power of war to destroy all armed opposition to the Government. Everything necessary to accomplish this, and in accordance with the rules of war as recognized by civilized nations, he may rightfully do. He may emancipate and arm slaves, arrest and confine dangerous public enemies, to prevent the execution of treasonable designs; and suppress for the time treasonable publications; all this to be done under the rules of war and the legitimate powers vested in the Executive of carrying on war against public enemies and traitors. It is his duty also to see that the constitutional guarantee of a republican form of government under the Federal Union shall be carried out. In the absence of the action of Congress, he may do all that it may be necessary to carry out these

purposes. He may appoint military governors. He may levy and collect taxes and assessments. He may institute temporary tribunals to administer justice. He may preserve the peace, prevent anarchy, and see that justice is done to all. In a word, he may and must *govern the country* in its transition state from a rebel to a loyal condition, or until Congress provides by law for its government, or until the people organize loyal State governments and are re-admitted into the Union. These principles are sanctioned by the Supreme Court in the California case, so often cited in this House.

These powers or most of them the President has exercised in Louisana, in Arkansas, and in Tennessee. He has done this under the advice and with the aid of such men as Andrew Johnson, Generals Butler and Banks; and the results are beginning to develope themselves in the disposition of the people of these States to return to the Union.

WHAT ARE THE POWERS OF CONGRESS?

Congress may and ought to pass all laws which may be necessary to carry into effect the power lodged in the Executive to administer for the time being the government of the territory in rebellion. Congress may regulate the mode of administration. It may control the method of governing the territory. Each House of Congress has the exclusive *power to determine* and judge of the election, return, and qualifications of its own members, and may of course determine when to admit or reject representatives from the rebel States. I think it requires the concurrent action of both the Executive and Congress for a complete restoration of rebel and revolted States into the Union.

THE AMNESTY PROCLAMATION.

The President, in communicating the amnesty proclamation to Congress, invites the aid, counsel, and co-operation of Congress in restoring national unity. This proclamation of amnesty looks to the re-establishment of loyal State governments in the rebel territory on the basis of freedom. It offers *peace* on the surrender by the rebels of the cause of the war—*slavery*. Practically it is already dissolving the rebel organization. Hundreds of rebel soldiers are daily bringing in and laying down their arms and accepting the terms of pardon. The advantages of this proclamation are—

1. It gives a rallying point for loyal men in the rebel States.
2. It secures forever *liberty* to the emancipated slave.
3. It will enable the United States to guarantee to every rebel State a republican form of government.
4. It will secure national unity on the basis of liberty.

RECONSTRUCTION.

The questions involved in the subject of reconstruction are of the most grave and important character. Broken unions are ever hard to restore. We may crush the military power of the rebels, and yet the southern people may, possibly, sullenly refuse to return and participate in the Government. It is desirable that when the Union is restored it may unite a *fraternal* people. We do not desire the cotton States to occupy the relation to the national Government of a struggling Poland, or Hungary, or Venice. The only basis on which real cordial union can be predicated is that of liberty. We must remove the cause of our divisions. Remove slavery, and the old American idea of Union and

love of country will resume their sway. Yankee Doodle and the Star-Spangled Banner will again thrill the hearts of all Dixie-land. The old flag, *God bless it forever*, will be worshipped with an ardor and devotion unknown before the war.

If you cannot have a Union based upon freedom, you cannot have it at all. This the President with his usual sagacity has seen, and he offers amnesty and liberty. My firm conviction is, that upon this basis alone is union attainable. This furnishes the only hope; but with freedom, when the sword has subjugated armed resistance, we may weld together the links of this broken chain. From the beginning of the revolt, the Government has offered to the rebels peace and good will, and upon the sole condition that they should lay down their arms. This offer has been met with scorn and defiance. The President now offers peace upon the condition that the insurgents submit and give up slavery. They are asked to abandon that which has been a curse alike to them, to us, to all. Humanity and Christianity pray that these humane, generous, magnanimous terms may be accepted. This cruel war will not stop; this rebellion will never be sanctioned as revolution. The loyal people of the United States, if these terms are rejected, will demand that the diseased limb be amputated. They have been very slow to anger, but they are now thoroughly aroused, and it will soon be difficult to appease their just rage.

The loyal people preferred peace to war, but they are rapidly acquiring a taste for war's fierce excitements and its dazzling glory. They are an indomitable race of men, the descendants of those who conquered England, Ireland and Scotland, and who have themselves never been conquered. On this continent they have conquered the forests, subdued the Indian tribes, and wrested from England their independence. If driven to it, they will exterminate the soft, pampered, sensual, slave aristocracy, which makes up the rebel leaders. The time is rapidly approaching when the loyal people will say to the rebels, "We have tried to conciliate you; we have offered you terms; you reject them with scorn; you hate and defy us; you refuse any terms of peace. *Be it so.* We accept the issue. We will treat you as enemies; we will conquer you, and liberating your slaves we will divide your lands among them, the poor whites and our brave soldiers. Henceforth you are subjects, no longer to be treated as citizens."

The President does not yet say this; on the contrary, his treatment is to-day as it has been from the beginning, generous, humane and magnanimous, such as is becoming the head of a great and Christian nation. He offers peace on the conditions that the rebels submit, give up slavery, and accept freedom. He offers the blessings of peace and prosperity, only requiring the surrender of that terrible curse, which has brought upon us and them all the horrors of this war.

IS SLAVERY DEAD?

The distinguished gentleman from New York, [Mr. BROOKS,] produced a great sensation the other day by announcing that slavery was already dead. I do not know whether we were so much startled by the fact, as that that gentleman should be the first to announce it. Like some others who lag far behind in the chase, he seemed determined to be in at the death. But I am not yet willing to admit the fact that slavery is dead. I rejoice to know that it is in a dying condition, but it has not yet given up the ghost. Let the "*Rail-Splitter*" *of Illinois* give the cursed monster a few more vigorous blows, and make its destruction certain. Possibly the gentleman from New York might have been playing a game familiar to western hunters; he, or the institution which he declares dead might have been playing *possum*. But to assume a tone more

becoming a subject so grave, let me remind the gentleman from New York, who is a scholar, and familiar with history, that in the days of Oliver Cromwell it was supposed monarchy was dead in England. Yet but a few years passed by, and Charles the Second was on the throne of England, and monarchy in full sway, stronger apparently than before the execution of Charles the First. God save our country from the return of the slave kings. God save us from ever seeing the destinies of this nation pass again into the hands of slave mongers. Therefore I am for taking security for the future by *immediately abolishing slavery, and amending the Constitution, prohibiting its existence forever in every part of the Union.* But if slavery is indeed dead, why do not its friends, those who have stood by it, in sunshine and in storm, why do they not now pronounce its eulogy? It was a king in the land. It was a ruler in these halls, and lord paramount in yonder Executive Mansion. If dead, where are its friends and mourners? If your idol is dead, is it not decent for you at least to seem to mourn?

But Mr. Chairman, this great revolution is not yet ended. Would to God it were. The storm still rages; dangers and difficulties still overshadow the future. Much remains to be done, to subdue rebel armies, to maintain national credit, to hold the loyal people united, to preserve liberty and law, and reconstruct the edifice of constitutional liberty. A task is before us, taxing to the utmost, all we have of skill and bravery in the field; of wisdom and integrity and patriotism and statesmanship in the cabinet, before we can feel that our country "*has weathered the storm,*" and "*all is well.*" Our greatest danger arises from insane divisions among ourselves. With Lincoln at the helm of State, with Grant commanding our armies, and Chase, holding the scarcely less difficult and responsible position at the head of the Treasury, and a cordial union of the friends of these great leaders and all loyal men, our success is certain.

THE PRESIDENCY.

The constitutional period for the election of a President approaches and compels an answer to the question, who shall lead us through this fearful storm to the haven of peace? Shall we change leaders while the tempest of battle is raging? No, say the people, with that *instinctive sagacity* which has all along characterized them. They have already settled this question, with a unanimity never equalled since the days of Madison and Washington. From Maine to Maryland, from Minnesota to California, from ocean to ocean, from north to south, there is but one voice. It is emphatic, earnest, spontaneous, unprompted; having its origin in the faith which the people everywhere feel in the honesty, justice, truth, courage, patriotism and good sense of the President. The "*secret circulars,*" organizations, and efforts of politicians, to divert or change it, will be idle and useless. This choice of the people will be ratified at the ballot-box by a vote never before surpassed in unanimity. Why is this? It is because the people recognize in Abraham Lincoln *the apostle of liberty.*

LINCOLN THE APOSTLE OF LIBERTY.

It is his mission to restore national unity, on the basis of universal liberty. He is to lead the people through this revolution and preserve the old safeguard of freedom embodied in Magna Charta and the Constitution of the United States. When he leaves the Presidential chair, in 1869, we are to be one people, one nation, and every man secured in the enjoyment of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Every man equal before the law. Every man en-

joying liberty of speech, the freedom of the press, trial by jury, and the writ of Habeas Corpus.

Such is the grand ideal which he is laboring practically to realize. To accomplish this, he needs the continued confidence, trust, and faith of the American people. With these, by the blessing of Almighty God, those great purposes may be realized.

Mr. Chairman, studied and persistent efforts having been made in this Hall, in the Senate, and elsewhere, to disparage the President, I deem it a duty, and it is a privilege, to present briefly, and as clearly, candidly, and truthfully as I am able, the reasons why the President should continue to enjoy that trust and confidence which has hitherto enabled him to accomplish so much, to advance so far, in these great purposes, and to show why all the friends of national unity, and those who idolize liberty, should have *faith* in the President.

The public life of Mr. Lincoln may be said to have commenced in June, 1856, when he made the memorable speech at Springfield, announcing, in words that arrested the attention of the nation, the antagonism between liberty and slavery. From that hour he became the apostle of freedom. From that day his life has been consecrated to one great purpose, *that of freeing his country from African slavery.* There is not in all history a more striking exhibition of the wonderful, almost miraculous influence of a great truth, uttered at the right moment, than this. It has been, as I have said, publicly announced on the floor of Congress, that slavery is dead. If so, Abraham Lincoln, with the sling and stone of truth, has slain the monster.

I said that Mr. Lincoln's public life commenced with his memorable speech at Springfield, June, 1856.

HIS TRAINING.

Let us see what had been his previous training for his great work. It was not the training of the schools; it was better. It was a struggle with difficulties among the people. He had the foundation of perfect integrity, truth, candor, sobriety, self-control, self-reliance, modesty. With clear judgment, sound common sense, shrewd knowledge of human nature, *he is the most American of Americans.* He had served a single term in Congress, but his education, his preparation was among the people, in humble and homely positions; a flat-boatman, a rail-splitter, a surveyor, a member of the legislature in a frontier State, a lawyer, in the log courthouses of the west. While he had no university schooling, few, if any, have had a better training to develope and strengthen his intellectual powers than he. This may seem strange, but let me explain, and its truth will, I think, be conceded.

He was trained at the bar in a school where giants were his competitors, and he bore off the crown.

WHO WERE HIS COMPETITORS?

Some twenty years ago, there gathered around the plain, pine tables of the frontier court-houses of central Illinois a very remarkable combination of men. Among them, and concededly their leader, was Abraham Lincoln; Stephen A. Douglas, his great *political* rival; Lyman Trumbull, chairman of the judiciary committee of the Senate; E. D. Baker, the able, the eloquent senator, soldier, and martyr to liberty; Gen. James Shields, who won a high reputation at Washington, and on the battlefields of Mexico; Gen. John J. Hardin, an able and eloquent lawyer, who fell on the bloody field of Buena Vista; James A. McDougal, the present Senator from California; William A. Richardson, present

Senator from Illinois, and Gen. John A. McClernand, now in the field. Besides these was the late Gov. Bissell, whose manly vindication of the bravery of the Illinois volunteers in Mexico, against the aspersions of Jefferson Davis, will be well remembered; a vindication which resulted in a challenge from the traitor Davis, which was accepted by Bissell, but from which Davis backed down, it is said under the advice of Gen. Taylor. These men, of national reputation, and others equally able, but whose pursuits have been confined at home, were the competitors with Lincoln. These were the men in contest with whom Abraham Lincoln was trained for the terrible ordeal through which he is passing.

CONTEST BETWEEN LINCOLN AND DOUGLAS.

The contest between Lincoln and Douglas, in 1858, was the most remarkable in American history. They were the acknowledged leaders, each of his party. Both, men of great and marked individuality of character. The prize was the Senatorship of the great State of Illinois, and the success of the Republican or Democratic party. Douglas had the additional stimulant of the Presidency in view. These two trained leaders met, at designated places, and in the presence of immense crowds of people, debated the great questions at issue.

Douglas went through this campaign like a conquering hero. He had his special train of cars, his band of music, his body guard of devoted friends, a cannon carried on the train, the firing from which announced his approach to the place of meeting. Such a canvass involved, necessarily, very large expenditures, and it has been said that Douglass did not expend less than $50,000 in this canvass. Some idea of the plain, simple, frugal habits of Mr. Lincoln may be gathered, when I tell you that at its close, having occupied several months, Mr. Lincoln said, with the idea, apparently, that he had been somewhat extravagant, "I do not believe I have spent a cent less than five hundred dollars in this canvass."

Senator Douglas was at that time the leading debater in the United States Senate. He had been accustomed to meet for years in Congress the trained leaders of the nation, and never, either in single combat, or taking the fire of a whole party, had he been discomfited. He was bold, defiant, confident, aggressive; fertile in resources, terrible in denunciation, familiar with political history, practiced in all controversial discussion, of indomitable physical and moral courage, and unquestionably the most formidable man in the nation on the stump. The friends of Mr. Lincoln were not without misgivings when the challenge was given and accepted for a campaign with Douglas, on the stump. Mr. Lincoln was cool, candid, truthful, logical, never betrayed into an unfair statement; and it was wonderful how, in these discussions, as in every other act of his public life, he has impressed the people with his honesty and fairness. Every hearer of these debates went away with the conviction, whatever his political views, "Lincoln believes what he says, he is candid, and he would not misstate a fact, or take an unfair advantage to secure a triumph." He had one advantage over Douglas. He was always good-humored. He had always his apt story for illustration, and while Douglas was sometimes irritable, and would lose his temper, Lincoln never lost his.

Douglas carried away the most popular applause, but Lincoln made the deeper and more lasting impression. Douglas did not disdain an immediate triumph, while Lincoln looked to permanent conviction. Douglas addressed the feelings and prejudices with a power and adroitness never surpassed. Lincoln stated his propositions and proved their truth with irresistible logic. Douglas carried the majority of the legislature of Illinois, but Lincoln had the

majority ~ *on* popular vote. Douglas secured the Senatorship, and Lincoln gained the Presidency. The wonderful endurance of these men, both of iron constitutions, was strikingly manifest during this contest. But at its close, *Douglas* could not articulate clearly for some weeks, while Lincoln's voice was clearer, stronger, and he himself was in better health at the end than he was at the beginning of the contest.

The friends of each of these great leaders claimed the victory. All must admit, that each met in his antagonist a foeman worthy of his steel.

The nomination of Mr. Lincoln to the Presidency, came to him unsought and unsolicited. The great leaders of national parties struggled by their powerful friends and organizations for the nomination at Chicago. Mr. Lincoln remained quietly at his home in Springfield, pursuing the usual course of his quiet, simple life, and the Presidency sought him, he did not go after nor seek it. Many have seen in the manner in which he was called to the Executive Mansion the finger of Providence.

LINCOLN LEAVING HOME FOR WASHINGTON.

I need not recall the dark and threatening aspect of affairs in the winter of 1860–'61. A long planned, deep-laid conspiracy, about to break upon the land, with all the horrors of civil war. Patriots saw the tornado coming, saw the traitors plotting and planning the destruction of the government, disarming, plundering it, binding it, preparing it to fall an easy victim into the hands of traitors, and yet had no means to resist, because all its machinery was in the hands of traitors. How impatiently and fearfully they waited for the 4th of March all will remember. The President elect felt the oppressive weight of responsibility resting upon him. There is not a more simple, touching and beautiful speech in the English language than that which he uttered to his neighbors from the platform of the Rail-Car, on bidding good-bye to his home, to enter upon the duties of the Presidency.

"For more than twenty-five years I have lived among you, and during all that time I have received nothing but kindness at your hands. Here the most cherished ties of earth were assumed. Here my children were born, and here one of them lies buried.

"To you, my friends, I owe all that I have, all that I am. All the strange checkered past seems to crowd now upon my mind. To-day I leave you. I go to assume a task more difficult than that which devolved upon General Washington. Unless the great God who assisted him shall be with and aid me, I cannot prevail; but if the same Omniscient mind, and the same Almighty arm that directed and protected him shall guide and support me, I shall not fail; *I shall succeed.* Let us pray that the God of our fathers may not forsake us now. To him I commend you all. Permit me to ask that, with equal sincerity and faith, you will all invoke his wisdom and guidance for me."

The feeling of the people was impressively exhibited by the mottoes on the banners which they extended across the streets through which he passed on his way to the Capitol. "*We will pray for you*" was often the significant motto.

LINCOLN'S INAUGURATION.

No so impressive an inauguration as that of Mr. Lincoln has occurred since the inauguration of Washington. He had been threatened with assassination, and the rebels had intended his murder as he passed through Baltimore. On his arrival here he found the public offices filled with traitors. Strange as it may seem, the rebel generals Lee, and Joe and Albert Johnson, and Ewell and Hill, Stewart and Magruder, Pemberton and Winder, held in March and April, 1861, leading positions in our Army. Traitors were everywhere.

The citizens of Washington were, a large portion of them, in sympathy with the rebels. Secession had been preceded by secret conspiracy, concocted by those holding the highest official trusts. It had been veiled by perjured professions of loyalty. On Mr. Lincoln's arrival here these were the men he found in all the public offices, and he was encircled on every side by spies and traitors. None who witnessed it will ever forget the scene of that inauguration. Standing on the eartern front of the Capitol, the judges of the Supreme Court, the Senate and House of Representatives, the high officers of the army and navy around him, a mingled crowd of traitors and patriots, with many an eye looking searchingly into his neighbor's to learn whether he gazed upon a traitor or a friend; standing there amidst scowling enemies with murder and treason in their hearts, Lincoln was cool and determined. He read his inaugural with a voice clear and distinct enough to be heard by twice ten thousand people. When with reverent look he swore by the Eternal God that he would faithfully "*preserve, protect, and defend*" the Constitution, his great rival Douglas stood, *not by accident*, at his side. Douglas knew, perhaps, better than the President himself, the dangers and difficulties which surrounded him. He was observed to whisper in the ear of Mr. Lincoln, and I believe gave to the President the assurance that in the dark and difficult future he would stand by him and give him his utmost aid in upholding the Constitution and crushing treason and rebellion. Nobly did Douglas redeem that pledge. After the rebel attack on Sumter, he boldly made the well known declaration that there could now be but two parties, patriots and traitors. Had he lived he would have sustained the President with all the vigor and energy peculiar to his character.

REMARKABLE PREDICTION OF DOUGLAS IN JANUARY, 1861.

Here I will pause a moment to state a most remarkable prediction made by Douglas in January, 1861. The statement is furnished to me by General C. B. Stewart, of New York, a gentleman of the highest respectability.

Douglas was asked by Colonel Stewart, (who was making a New Year's call on Mr. Douglas,) "What will be the result of the efforts of Jefferson Davis and his associates to divide the Union?" Douglas replied, "The cotton States are making an effort to draw in the border States to their schemes of secession, and I am too fearful they will succeed. If they do succeed, there will be the most terrible civil war the world has ever seen, lasting for years. Virginia will become a charnel house; but the end will be the triumph of the Union cause. One of their first efforts will be to take possession of this capital to give them *prestige* abroad, but they will never succeed in taking it; the North will rise *en mass* to defend it; but it will become a city of hospitals; the churches will be used for the sick and wounded; and even this house and the Minnesota block (now the *Douglas Hospital*) may be devoted to that purpose before the end of the war." General Stewart enquired "What justification is there for all this? *Douglas* replied, "There is no justification nor any pretence of any. If they will remain in the Union I will go as far as the Constitution will permit to maintain their just rights, and I do not doubt but a majority of Congress will do the same. But," said he, rising on his feet and extending his arm, "if the southern States attempt to secede from this Union without further cause, I am in favor of their having just so many slaves, and just so much slave territory, as they can hold at the point of the bayonet *and no more*."

On the 4th of March thereafter, surrounded by spies and traitors, the treasury robbed, the army and navy dispersed, knowing scarcely who to trust, the President took possession of the White House, and entered upon his duties. On one side the Capitol was Virginia, with her disloyal militia guarding the

Long Bridge, ripe for revolt, and ready from the heights of Arlington and the Potomac to bombard the Capitol. Between it and the loyal States lay Maryland, ready to rise in arms the moment the rebel flag was unfurled; nay, not waiting for this, but rising and burning bridges, tearing up rail-ways, and murdering Union soldiers on their way to defend Washington. The seat of Government was thus isolated in the midst of a hostile people. Congress had adjourned, and the fate of the nation and of liberty rested upon the President. He was equal to the occasion. He was wise as he was firm. He saved the capital and he preserved the nation. Contrast the condition of our country then and now, with more than half the territory then in rebellion reclaimed, and deny if you can that Abraham Lincoln has high administrative powers. It has been well said of him in view of his administration, remembering the past and looking to the future, "the people know the necessities of the hour and appreciate the man who is at the helm. They trust him. * * * By masterly action and by masterly inaction, this sage and hero from the backwoods has commanded the entire confidence of a great people; of a people the most intellectual and forcible upon earth."

It is not my purpose to speak in detail of the acts of this administration. There are a few general considerations in regard to it, to which I ask the candid consideration of the country.

First, our foreign relations, few will deny, have been managed with ability and success through a period of extreme difficulty and danger. Whatever exception and criticism may justly be made upon particular dispatches, the result has been peace, and non-intervention, and thus far, the country is satisfied that a cool, wise and sagacious head is at the helm. The government has been so administered as to secure the substantial union and harmony of the loyal people of all parties. This has been done amidst all the passionate excitement and turbulant feeling growing out of civil war. It has been accomplished, during a period in which the President has necessarily exercised the extraordinary power of summary arrests, suspension of the *Habeas Corpus*, and the suppression of disloyal and treasonable publications by military power; all of them acts which could not but receive the most searching scrutiny, of a people like ours, so jealous of their liberties. Yet the great mass of the people have felt perfect confidence in the integrity and patriotism and prudence of the Executive, and rested easy, with the full faith that he would exercise those high powers only to secure the life of the nation. Who, of all our statesmen could have exercised these extraordinary powers, and created so little uneasiness and distrust? However others have doubted and hesitated, Mr. Lincoln's faith in the success of our cause has never been shaken. He has been radical in all that concerns slavery, and conservative in all that relates to liberty.

His course upon the slavery question has shown his love of freedom, his sagacity and his wisdom. From the beginning he has believed that the rebellion would dig the grave of slavery. He has allowed the *suicide* of slavery to be consummated by the slave-holders themselves. Many have blamed him for going too fast in his anti-slavery measures, more, I think, have blamed him for going too slow, of which I have been one. History will perhaps give him credit for acting with great and wise discretion. The calm, intelligent, philosophic abolitionists of the old world, uninfluenced by the passions which surround and color our judgments, send across the ocean congratulation and admiration on the success and wisdom of his course. The three leading features of his administration on the subject of slavery are:

1. His proclamation of emancipaton.
2. The employment of negroes as soldiers.

3. The amnesty proclamation; making liberty the corner-stone of reconstruction.

The Emancipation proclamation will live in history as one of those great events which measure the advance of the world. The historian will rank it along side with the acquisition of *magna charta* and the *Declaration of Independence*. This great State paper was issued after the most careful and anxious reflection, and concludes with these solemn words: "And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution and military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God."

The considerate judgment of mankind, on both sides of the ocean, have already approved it, and God has seemed to favor it with a series of victories to our arms never witnessed before its issue—a series of victories, for which we are more indebted to the President than to any other man.

The country will not forget the tenacious adherence of the President to Grant, when nearly all seemed to desert him. True, this trait in his character, this pertinacious adherence to those, he trusts was, I think, carried too far in the long continuance in the service of the hero of the Chichahominy. The President could not convert the hero of the Chickahominy into the hero of the Mississippi; but this same characteristic, if it resulted in many reverses to the Army of the Potomac, has given us Vicksburgh and Lookout Mountain, and will I trust, ere long, secure our complete triumph over the rebel armies.

But to return to the proclamation. It has been objected to this proclamation, that it did not embrace all the territory in rebellion. For myself, I have always regretted that it did not include all the States in revolt. But I believe the truth is, this was the result of the advice of the loyal men of the border States. For instance, I believe that the man most influential in preventing the great State of Tennessee from being designated in this paper was the patriot and statesman, Andrew Johnson; and I believe to-day he regrets more than any other man that it was left out. Yet, who will blame the President for listening with deference to the advice of Andrew Johnson in regard to Tennessee?

The employment of negro soldiers needs to-day no vindication. All sanction and approve it, and they themselves are gallantly fighting their way to the favor of the country.

The amnesty proclamation, although assailed by essayists and politicians, is working out practically its own vindication. Hundreds of rebel soldiers are daily bringing in, and laying down their arms. In the west it is dissolving the rebel armies. Under its influence, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Arkansas, will soon return as free States. The day that sees these States again in the Union as free, loyal States, will see the beginning of the end of this rebellion. Under the influence of this proclamation, with such changes as experience may suggest, or as Congress may establish, or sanction, we may hope to see the rebel territory all restored, and our great country redeemed from the curse of slavery.

Our duty as a loyal people emay be expressed in four words, for three of which I have to thank my friend from Maine [Mr. PIKE.] We must *unite, fight, tax, and emancipate.*

But let us not disguise from ourselves that the coming year is one full of peril. The danger is not all in the direction from which it is most apprehended.

A nation without a government is, as Alexander Hamilton said, "*an awful spectacle.*"

There are dangerous elements in our midst, and a presidential election in the midst of a civil war, will try the capacity of the people for self-government as they have never been tried before. We are in the midst of rushing torrents of opinion and passion dangerous and difficult to control. We are tossing on the

billows of a raging sea. Anxious friends of liberty are everywhere asking, will the great American republic strand for want of order and rule?

Confidence in our success has been continually increasing. Is it wise to change our leader in the mist of this storm, and while all the world is admiring the honesty, the justice, the fidelity, and the wisdom of that leader? No, rather let us give no indications of weakness or division among ourselves, but uniting, all, for our country and for liberty, let us rally around the pilot who has thus far guided us in safety.

In response to the cry that comes from the rebels at Richmond, "*anybody* but Lincoln," let us reply, "*nobody* but Lincoln!" until liberty triumphs, and national unity is restored.

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